

5 October 1976

NOTE FOR: DDCI

SUBJECT: Carter's Position on CIA

AT 1. There has been little in Carter's public or private statements to indicate that he is contemplating drastic changes regarding the CIA. He has stressed the necessity of having a good intelligence system. He has expressed some misgivings about past covert action operations, such as [] but he has never stated that he intends to dispense with covert action entirely. He has made a rather strong point that the President is responsible for any mistakes of the CIA. He has also stated that the Agency must act within the law and should not plot assassinations in peacetime. He has made complimentary comments about the DCI and it would not be surprising if he retained Mr. Bush as Director after his inauguration. In a more general context, Carter has stated that there has been too much secrecy in Government and not enough respect for the personal privacy of American citizens. He has called for an open CIA budget, perhaps his most controversial position as far as we are concerned.

2. Carter has received briefings from the DCI and his principal subordinates on the intelligence side of the House. Those who have participated in these briefings come away with the feeling that Carter believes a strong CIA is a necessity to the President--that perhaps without a personality as strong as Kissinger at the Department, Carter might rely even more on the Agency than Ford does. At the last briefing session, Senator Mondale went out of his way to praise the Agency in Carter's presence. This was tantamount to Mondale telling Carter that whatever problems the CIA had caused for the past Administration, he, Carter, would not have the CIA as his problem in the future.

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